In the Irrigated Land

AS Mrs. Clawson entered the kitchen, carrying a pan piled high with new potatoes, she threw an impatiently sharp glance toward her husband. He was standing near a chair, his hand resting weakly on its back.

"You kin talk to me forever, Hi Clawson, 'bout that water; but if I had fifty springs 'stead o' fifteen and the dry season lasted twelve months 'stead o' six, not a drop, not a solit'ry drop, would Mary Long git from one o' my trenches. She's no friend o' mine—"

"She wuz back East, mother—" Clawson choked at his own boldness. "Her veg'tables is all dryin' up—her boarders is leavin' on ev'ry downstage—"

A faint red showed itself under Mrs. Clawson's dark, wrinkled skin. She lowered her brows ominously.

"D'yeh happen to mind Mary Long a-prophesyin' that I'd never do better than pick up a crooked stick in the matrimonyel market?"

Clawson had heard the report of Mary Long's speech on the occasion of many family jars; yet the words never failed to make him wince. He sat down, throwing one knee over the other. Then he crossed his wrists and let his head fall forward humbly.

"I wouldn't lift a finger (Mrs. Clawson's voice was as solemn as the tolling of a bell) for Mary Long—I wouldn't give her a cup o' tea if she come a-beggin' at my back door. No; not—not if even Bobbie ast me to."

Bobbie was their son; and to refuse any request of his was the final test and triumph of Mrs. Clawson's will power.

Clawson's eyes followed his wife as she drew up a chair and began to scrape the skins from the small, pink-brown potatoes. A look of incredulity came into his patient stare and rested there.

After a little while he said, still observing his wife keenly: "I never knew yeh to refuse Bobbie anything yet. I bet if he'd want 'o marry Mary Long's gurll you'd—"

But he stopped speaking, silenced by the glare from his wife's dark eyes.

The hand folding the knife began to tremble.

"You ought 'o be ashamed o' yourself suggestin' sech a thing. Our Bobbie to marry into that fam'ly! I'd rather he'd marry an Injun from up the valley. Don't set there with that look on your face, as if you b'lieved sech a thing could happen."

She threw her head up stiffly, keeping her eyes on her husband, meaning to look him out of countenance.

His glance dropped. "Don't let's quarr'l, mother. Got anything for me to do? Got plenty o' wood in?"

For a moment she was silent. Her husband must not be permitted to imagine that her indignation could be appeased by any such trifling overtures.

"Yes," she said, cutting off the word fiercely. "I have got something fer you to do. Strengthen up that trench where it makes the sharp turn nex' Mary Long's field. We'll be irrigatin' her corn patch the firs' thing you know." She spoke contemptuously; then she laughed low and maliciously. "That dry trench o' hers with only a foot or two of solid ground between it and that fine little stream of ours! And some time, father, between this an' bedtime, I want you to take a stick and scratch two or three little channels down tow-wards the tomatoes. The other garden stuff is fairly growin' up out of a swamp; but, somehow, the tomatoes has been forgot."

Clawson rose and slowly left the room.

While Mrs. Clawson prepared the noon-hour dinner she frequently peered up the long slope leading from the kitchen porch. It was planted in methodical patches of garden truck. Some of the green clumps had outgrown their strength and could be seen to sprawl, as if for support, over smaller, stockier growths. Mrs. Clawson's gaze was bounded by a hedge of manzanita, whose small trunks and twisted limbs showed a soft red, like dressed cedar. A wide ditch ran along the hedge, the water turning near the group of pines and hurrying down through the southwestern corner of the Clawson ranch to the creek.

When Mrs. Clawson saw her husband bend to pick up an armful of broken rock she sat down contentedly near the open door; she braced the small, square coffee mill firmly between her knees, and turned the handle with a fierce, spirited movement.

"Clawson, dinner's ready," she called, half an hour later.

As she went along the path she pulled off the withered roses from the bushes. When she came to the barbed wire fence she stood looking out critically across her neighbor's blighted corn field. Not a healthy stalk to be seen anywhere among those sickly plants: each one thirsing for water.

The ditch flowed rather noisily at her feet as it ran along the steepest part of the hill. Three hundred feet west the creek sang musically in a muffled road.

Mrs Clawson's thin lips curved in a downward crescent.

"Clawson," she called again. But he was at her side, and followed her heavily over the plank laid across the trench.

"Whatever has become of that boy of ours?" she said, affectionately. "Took his rods and fly-book out with him early this morning. Said he'd be back at dinner time, sure. Well, Clawson, how'd you git along with the work?" She turned a suspicious eye on her husband.

"I tightened the wall," he replied, meekly.

They walked along silently to the kitchen door. Mrs. Clawson went on, going round to the front of the house. She looked about in every direction, shading her eyes with her brown, knotty hands. She tried to decipher the spaces of shadow among the thickets and trees near the creek. She thought she saw a splotch of dark red and gold color.

"Must be the sun strikin' on the back o' wild cattle. They been a-strayin' round here lately."

She started toward the creek. Then, with a wavering movement, turned and hurried back to the kitchen.

"You better start eatin'," she called to Clawson. "I'm goin' down to see if I can't see somethin' o' Bobbie. Don't touch that light pinkish piece of ham in the skillet; that's fer Bobbie."

Mrs. Clawson walked with long strides through the young orchard. When she came to the bank, where the footpath descended precipitately to the creek, she stopped, looking up, down, across. The water dashed, foaming, from among a tumbled mass of bowlders.

She went down the path, brushing against the willows. At the opening, where the bushes had been cut away, she could see the bend. The water ran swiftly around the low, opposite bank; broke into a stretch of little, metallic waves. Over there the trout might be caught by the hundred in an hour or two.

Mrs. Clawson thought she heard a laugh, shrill and happy, above the bubbling and chatter and roar of the creek.

Then she saw a young girl throw up a line, on which dangled a frantic fish. Near by, her son stood, his hands in his pockets, laughing.

Mary Long's girl!

The same golden-red hair; the same vivid coloring in the cheeks and lips; the same dark, luminous eyes.

Bobbie was now tearing the fish off the hook—not taking his gaze, which she knew was tender, from the face of Mary Long's girl.

Mrs. Clawson watched the young girl as she scrambled onto the bank, trying to catch the writhing and leaping trout. She noted the soft, pretty outlines of the girl's figure as she swayed forward to throw the fish out into the middle of the stream. She saw the coquetry of Miss Long's demure return to her son's side; the challenge in her glance up to his. But when he put his arms around her she turned deliberately and stamped firmly up the path.

* * * * * * * *

Mr. and Mrs. Clawson sat on the back porch. It was growing dark. Mt. Sahnedrim was a mere blur against the dusky sky; the entrance to the little arbor, over which the wild hop vine rioted, was fading into the general dimness.

For a half hour no word had been spoken. At last Clawson, summoning up courage, said: "I didn't think you'd let him git so far, mother, as to be upstairs there alone packin' his things."

"I didn't know you ever did any thinkin' on any subject, Hi Clawson," she replied. A tear, of which she took no notice, coursed its way down her thin cheek.

Silence reigned for several minutes. Then Mrs. Clawson said, in a sad monotone: "Guess you'd better hitch up the buckboard now; it always takes you s'long to do anything. The stage starts from Long's at eight o'clock; it's about seven now."

"Mother," Clawson said, "you ain't surely goin' to let our boy go away without 'is supper?"

She answered his impertinence with a stony stare.

"You jest hitch up now, Hi. I'll cook you up a bite after—after he—some time to-night."

To be misunderstood always made Clawson flinch, embarrassed, as from a blow. He rose slowly, moving off the porch with uncertain step.

Tears began to rain down Mrs. Clawson's face.

Presently she heard her son coming down the stairs. Her attention followed his step as he strode into the parlor, then crossed the hall into the spare room. Her heart's pulse began to quicken as he came, hesitatingly, towards the door at her elbow. The door opened with a jerk, scraping over the floor noisily.

Her son sprang past her to the edge of the porch, where he crouched down, bracing his head against a small, upright post.

"Mother," he said, "I'm going away. But I'm not going away angry. I love Hattie Long—I can't stay where there's so much bitterness against my future wife's folks."

Mrs. Clawson muttered, as if to herself: "Of all people in the world! An' fer us, in a State a thousand miles long, to set ourselves right down nex' to 'em! On a piece of mortgaged property, too! Never caring a thing about us, until they needed our water—"

She sniffed contemptuously, then fell into a brooding silence.

The sound of wheels presently reached Mrs. Clawson's acute ears. She noted the grating noise as the wheels scraped along over the broken stone; and she recalled how her son, only yesterday, had spent the morning filling in the ruts near the broken-limbed pear tree.

Mrs. Clawson's hands were icy; her body shivered as with the cold.

Her son scrambled to his feet. He came and laid a strong hand on her shoulder.

"Remember, mother, I don't bear any ill will."

She caught hold of his hand. She cried out, in broken tones: "Don't go on to-night's stage, Bobbie. Oh, Bobbie, mebbe your mother kin learn to swallow her hard feelin's."

* * * * * * * *

Mrs. Clawson set the lighted lantern under the tall pines where the irrigating ditch made its abrupt turn.

With a long-handled hoe she quickly scraped a shallow channel through the weedy ground dividing the water and her neighbor's empty trench.

Then she bent stiffly over the stones her husband had patched into the wall in the morning. One of the stones stood up large and angular above the others. Mrs. Clawson tugged at it with awkward, outstretched arms. At last she succeeded in loosening it; and pushed it forward into the ditch.

The water gurgled and sped through the opening to form itself into a slender ittle stream.

Mrs. Clawson now seizing the lantern, held it at arm's length for a careful survey of the top of the wall. A larger, heavier stone hung near the newly made opening. This she succeedid in dislodging also. And when the water flowed down into Mary Long's trench, Mrs. Clawson chuckled grimly.

Certainly it would surprise no one that through a loose wall water should find for itself an opening, nor that afterward the refreshing stream should be allowed to pursue its own beneficent way.

Mrs. Clawson continued to laugh as she slung the lantern over her arm and picked her steps across to the toolshed, where she had found the hoe a half an hour earlier.

It had grown dark. When she started down the hill she could hardly see three feet before her.

'I come after yeh Sue," her husband's voice said out of the shadow of an apple-tree. "Is there anything the matter with yeh?"

"Nothin' that I'm aware of," she replied, in a non-committal tone.

"Yeh ain't sick, are ye, Sue? Well people don't wander around after dark."

"People should mind their own affairs, father," she replied.

"Would yeh mind my takin' the lantern, Sue?"

She thought she heard a note of covert triumph in his voice.

"Take it if yeh want," she spoke, indifferently. "I'm cold. I want 'o git back to the house."

He took the lantern from off her arm. She watched him curiously as his dark figure stumbled up the hill and stooped over the broken wall.

When he returned to her side he said: "Why didn't yeh tell me? I'd done 'a' for yeh."

"Done what?" she asked.

He burst into a laugh. It was the first laugh of unalloyed satisfaction he had enjoyed for years.

She clutched his arm.

"I expect yeh'll hold that over my head like the sword o' Damocles all the rest o' my life. That wall broke itself. Dunce!"

They hurried down the hill. He was in the lead to-night, holding the lantern down close to her feet.—San Francisco Argonaut.

Launching a Nile Boat.

An important function in Rhoda, a town on the Nile, is the launching of a large river boat, such as is used for the river traffic. It is considered by the natives as a sort of fete, and they attend with banners, dancing girls and music, and cheer the efforts of the workmen as, in true old Egyptian style, they launch the boat by the appliance of human force alone. In "The Land of the Khemi" a launching is described as follows:

The superintendent of the workmen was evidently of the opinion that backs were made before levers, and that the true way to launch a boat was not to allow her to glide into the water stern first, but to push her down the ways sideways by the sheer force of a united shove.

In order to get her to move at all, however, he began operations by rocking her to an extent that made her seams crack and the whole boat bend and crack ominously. When she was sufficiently loosened and her hold on the ways weakened by this operation, the music struck up, the flags waved, the dancing girls danced and the whole two hundred men, placing their backs beneath the boat, lifted up their voices in a loud groan of concentrated effort; then she moved an inch, and everybody rested.

The launching of the craft, diversified by numerous slips of the stern, which would go down more rapidly than the bow; by sundry hitches, in which neither bow nor stern would move at all, and, then by unexpected slides, when she threatened to topple over prematurely into the river, lasted just ten hours. It was accomplished, however, with great triumph and beating of drums, and then the procession marched back to the village.

We suppose that saying about misfortunes never coming singly originated with some man who noticed that he began to drop what he was eating on his vest, at the time that his eyesight grew poor.

HOW FORT SAN CARLOS FELL.

German Gunners Loaded Shells with Limburger Cheese.

In Fort San Carlos the Venezuelan garrison was pluckily withstanding the steady fire from the German warships. Shell after shell had exploded around them, men wounded or dead lay here and there, yet manfully they stuck to their guns and knew no fear, according to a writer in the New York Times.

"Do you worst!" cried Gen. Bello, hoarsely, shaking his powder-stained fist at the flame-belching ships riding beyond the bar.

And, though the brave Venezuelan knew it not, the worst was already coming his way.

From the smoke-clouded gun deck of the German flagship "Brave Bill" Pilsener, gunner's mate, had climbed to the bridge, where the squadron commander, in vexation, was pacing back and forth.

"I beg to report, sir," he began, saluting and speaking with the peculiar Williamsburg accent, "that I have a scheme to put them Venezuelans outer commission."

"Vell, vass iss?" returned the commander, impatiently.

"Why," explained the gunner's mate, with a cruel, devilish light in his eyes, "we've got sixteen cases of limburger cheese and nine barrels of sauerkraut left in the hold, and I would suggest that we load some of our shells with the stuff."

The German commander recoiled at first from so diabolical and uncivilized a method of warfare, but he was bent on victory, and in the end he yielded to the idea.

Behind the defiantly thundering walls of the fort brave Gen. Bello was making an encouraging speech to his men.

"Remember the customs receipts," he concluded, in a burst of patriotism, and a cheer went up from the powder-coated throats of his men.

Just then the first of the limburger and sauerkraut charged shells from the flagship's main battery exploded over the fort. As the thick, dense odor settled down around them the patriots, panic-stricken, drew their cutlasses and cutting their way through it fled frantically from the fort to the clear ozone of the hills beyond.

FORTUNES FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS

More than $1,500,000 is expended for photographs every year in New York city. Upward of 400 photographers reap this harvest, ranging from the Bowery tintype man to the ultra-fashionable artist with a studio on Fifth avenue.

Be it raining or shining, in war or in the piping times of peace, thousands seek the skylight galleries every day with the fell intention of being "took." The present era of prosperity is entirely favorable to the natural vanity which prompts the average man and woman to face the camera.

Photographers who maintain expensive establishments and cater to the swell set share largely in the advantages of the good times, but their clientele, the wealthy folk, who spend from $1,000 to $2,000 a year regularly for photographs, do not vary much in their orders whether the times be good or bad. It is the average business man and wage-earner, and more especially their families, who swell the photograph man's wallet these days, and thousands of such families spend from $50 to $100 a year.

Next to theatrical people, society folk get their pictures taken oftenest. Actors and actresses, so photographers say, are by no means the best of their patrons, and some of the studios decline their trade altogether, the principal reason being that they are bad pay. A member of one prominent firm said it was found inexpedient to deal with theatrical people and their regular patrons; it was like trying to mix oil with water, since the requirements of the theatrical photograph in accessories and back-ground differ widely from ordinary phases of the art. Not a few fashionable women, however, like their pictures in the style and similitude of actresses.

He (after the proposal)—But suppose your father objects?

She—Just inform him that I have decided to marry you, that will settle it.—Illustrated Bits.

A Hot Time.

"I got a cold supper when I went home to-night, and you bet I kicked about it."

"Did that do any good?"

"Well, my wife made it warm for me."—Philadelphia Press.

Ever notice a boy when he lounges around home in the evening? He sleeps a while in his chair, and then curls up on the lounge, but he won't go to bed.

When a baby cries in its father's arms, he at once takes steps toward appointing a receiver.

FOR AND ABOUT WOMEN

The Perfect Woman.

She shall be
As is a flower, so born in purity,
And in her virtues boundless as the air;
Girt up with fear, fenced round with chastity,
Rounded in wisdom perfect as a star.
Reverence shall wait upon her steps, and Love
Shall clothe her like a garment; on her brow
Shall Truth sit smiling like the watchful star
That hangs upon the forehead of the Eve.

A great simplicity shall mark her ways
And bind the linked action of her time;
Tears shall lie near the surface of her life;
Infinite pity, like a living spring,
Shall bubble in the silence of her heart;
Her soul shall hunger with an awful wish,
And all the pulses of her being yearn
To mitigate the sorrows of her kind.

Calm-eyed and patient, never speaking ill,
And slow to speak wherein she cannot praise;
Faith, never dim, shall guide her feet; and Hope
Shall brood upon her being like a dove;
And over all like Benediction's calm,
Shall all her paths be lit by Charity;
Faith, Hope and Charity, these three yet so
As Charity is greatest, shall she
Be known by Charity.
—Exchange.

The Well-Bred Girl.

Good breeding, to be sure, depends much on home and mother. It is said one's ancestors have a finger in it also.

But the girl who hasn't ancestors needn't despair.

Nor need she whose family are not everything that is to be desired.

It is nice, of course, to be born well bred. But one can achieve it.

Here are some of the ways it can be done:

The well-bred girl never fusses.

She takes her gowns, her hats, her success quite as a matter of course.

She is quite unconscious of her veil or her pompadour, her jewels, or her new shoes.

A pretty girl who is always admiringly spoken of as being "so well bred" was complimented on the pretty gown she was wearing. She was so entirely unconscious of it that she actually had to look down and see which one she had on.

The well- bred girl never airs family differences nor domestic upheavals.

She never asks personal questions.

If some sudden reversal of fortune comes she isn't always talking of her former circumstances.

Neither does she apologize for working for her living.

Her repose is not the quietness of weakness, but the calmness of strength. She is sure of herself, her family, her position; if she have not these, then of her own worthiness.

The well-bred girl is a rest, a delight. We know she will never betray a confidence, pry into personal affairs, nor put us to a disadvantage before others.—Philadelphia Evening Telegraph.

Cares for 110,301 Children.

Mrs. E. C. Pickert of St. Louis has had charge, during fifteen years, of 110,501 children. With this record, she retires from the position of matron of the South Side Day Nursery in St. Louis. An interesting fact is that she disapproves of whipping.

MRS. E. C. PICKERT.

When it is considered that none of the children in her care had passed the age of 6 years, and that the majority ranged in age from 3 weeks to 4 years, the prodigious task that Mrs. Pickert accomplished can be readily appreciated.

All of the thousands of children that Mrs. Picket cared for as only a woman and a mother can, were housed from time to time in the building at 1621 South Temple street, the commodious home of the South Side Day Nursery. The object of the nursery was and is to care for the small children of mothers who are forced to earn a livelihood for themselves and children, and also for the children of widowers.

Woman with Humor.

If you consider the list of your friends, it will not take you long to discover that the woman you like best is the woman with a sense of humor. She is the one you think of first if you are getting up a picnic or a card party. You do not, perhaps, formulate it even to yourself, but in your mind she stands for the utmost good humor. If it rains, or it shines, if anybody else is cross and grumpy, the woman with a sense of humor can extract fun out of the dreariest proposition, and the first thing you know she has set everybody to laughing at her droll sayings, and turned defeat into a triumph, for who cares whether your original plan was carried out or not, just so everybody has a good time?

A sense of humor is said to be lacking in most women. Alas! I have found this only too true, but I have noticed that when a woman does have it the men are the first to find it out, and all she has to do to acquire a husband is to pick and choose. The day of the girl with the doll face is going out and the day of the girl with a sense of humor is coming in.—Harper's Bazar.

Runs a Cat Farm.

There is a woman on the coast of Maine who has made a very considerable income conducting a cat farm. In her locality is a beautiful species of cat called by some of the natives "coon cat" and by others "shag cat." These cats in many cases attain to a considerable size, eighteen and twenty pounds being not at all uncommon.

They vary in color, have large heads, and many of them pronounced mutton chop whiskers in addition to their "smellers," the fur on their chests grows very long, and some among the finest of the breed have a small fur tassel growing from the very center of the chest.

In frequent instances these cats mature with blue eyes, and it is not uncommon to see a full-grown cat of this breed with one blue eye and one green eye.

Years ago many of the Maine sea captains brought home from their trips to Eastern ports specimens of the beautiful cats of the Orient, which in after years developed into the present coon cat.

The price ranges from $5 upward, size, color, etc., determining the cost. The proprietor of this cat farm says that cats are easitr to raise and command readier sales than dogs.

Gives Up the Pulpit to Marry.

Rev. Marie H. Jenney, a Unitarian minister in Des Moines, Iowa, and the daughter of the late Col. E. S. Jenney of Syracuse, N. Y., will leave the pulpit to marry Frederick O. Howe, a lawyer of Cleveland. Miss Jenney has been a pastor for five years. She was graduated from the Meadville Theological seminary in 1899 and afterward was assistant pastor of the Unitarian Church at Sioux Falls. Three years ago she accepted a call from the Des Moines church and has been preaching there since.

MARIE H. JENNEY.

Miss Jenney is a handsome young woman and was leader in society before she entered the ministry. Mr. Howe is a member of the law firm of Garfield, Garfield & Howe, in Cleveland, and is in politics with Tom L. Johnson, Mayor of that city.

Health and Beauty Hints.

Don't bend the knees in walking. No one wants to appear "weak-kneed." If you do you cannot be a poem when you walk.

Don't walk too far at first, when taking up outdoor exercise for the sake of your complexion. Stop just short of being tired.

Lime in the eye should be washed out quickly with vinegar and water, squeezing some drops on the eyeball. Then place a soft pad soaked in vinegar over the closed eye and secure it to the head by a bandage.

A speck of dust in the eye can be removed by a pointed piece of paper or a camel's-hair brush. Afterward close the eyes and bind a soft pad over the lids and allow it to remain until all feeling of pain is gone.

A sty, which is a blemish on beauty's face, is best treated with an application of hot cloths. Wring them out of water as hot as can be borne. Also bathe the eyes frequently with warm water containing spirits of camphor, the proportion being five drops to half a cup of water.

A simple preventive of seasickness is said to be a teaspoonful of bicarbonate of soda in a half-pint of water. Drink immediately on leaving shore. Some little time previously take an aperient. By maintaining a horizontal position the tendency to seasickness may be counteracted.

Monotony is the foe to appetite and digestion and also to good living. And there is no earthly excuse for it. We may be restricted to a few articles of food by reason of distance from market, but that is no reason why potatoes should be always "boiled in water" or eggs perpetually fried. Especially in spring is a change relished.

To remove yellow stains from the face take an ounce of dried rose leaves, add half a pint of white wine vinegar and let it stand for ten days; then draw off the vinegar and add to it half a pint of rose water. Keep this liquid bottled and when using pour a tablespoonful or so on a bit of cloth and sponge the face. Let it dry on the skin.

Blackheads are a mass of congested matter and dust; obviously their cure is in cleanliness and restored circulation of the blood vessels of the face—nothing but friction and cleanliness will prevent their return. Often they are the result of a disordered stomach, indigestion and constipation, and strict attention should be given to the laws of hygiene. Daily baths are necessary.